

Maxwell's Crossing

Shelton State Courier's Annual Literary and Fine Arts Publication




New Series Volume 8 Number 1

Courier Issue 157

Dec. 6, 2007—Jan. 23, 2008

Quality-Time with the Folks

Fiction by
Keith Huffman
Shelton Student

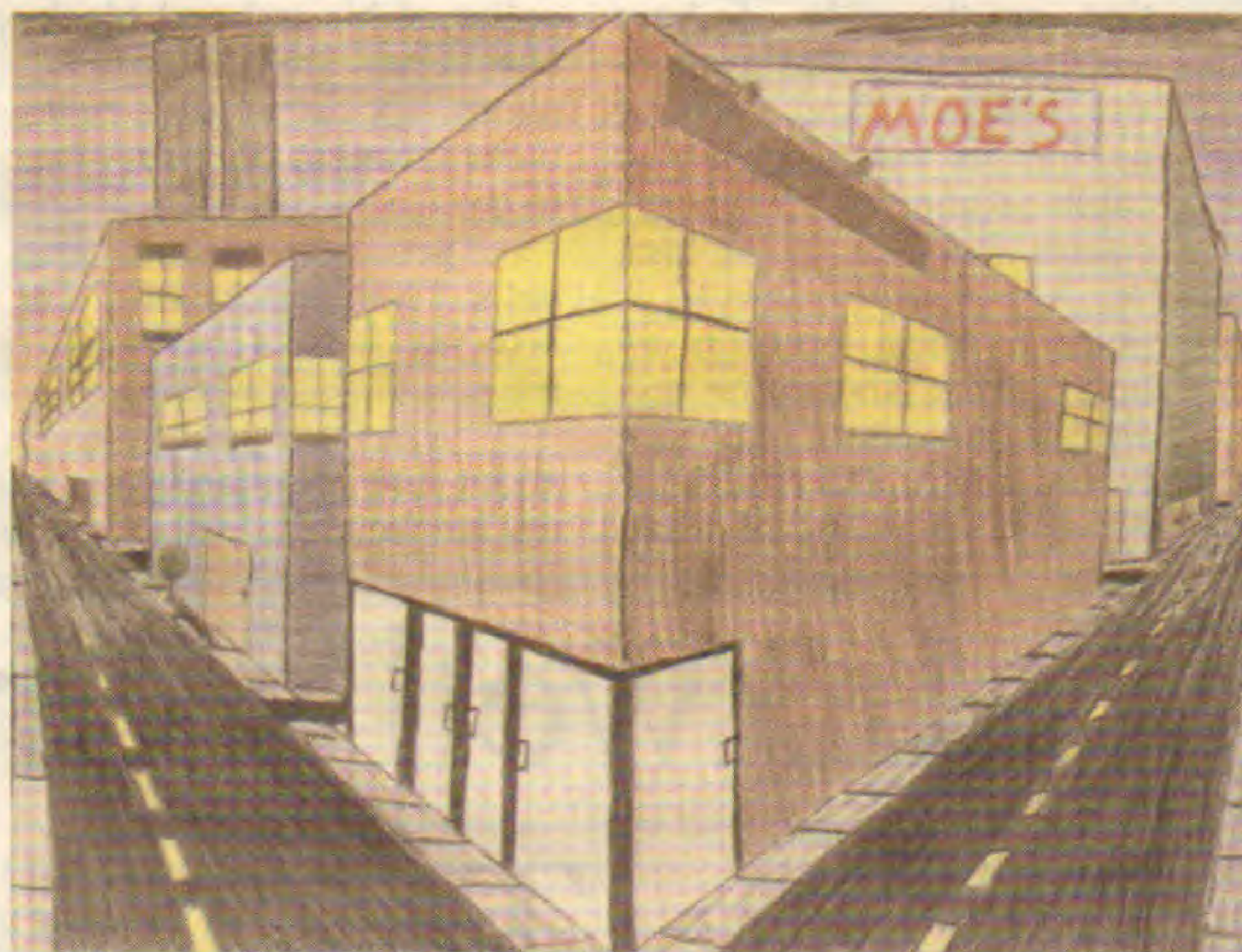
 Driving home from college, I check my voice-mail and listen to Dad instruct me to meet him at Aunt Lizzie's. He informs, "We're all gonna eat Thanksgiving early on account of Aunt Lizzie's having lung surgery next week." At present, it is Friday, November 16; approximately five days are blocking the way to the real Thanksgiving.

Arriving at Aunt Lizzie's place, which is a particularly compact and dust-coated white house residing about fifteen miles east of the Lost and Found Rivers that flow parallel into and out of what's known as Hambrick County's "backwoods country," I manage to park in one of the few remaining spots in her yard. Everywhere, there are cars, trucks and four-wheelers, and littered on the ground are crushed beer cans, a

See **Quality-Time**
Page 2



Distracted By Shelton student Neil Zanthos
2007 Winner - Best Art Work



Moe's By
Adam Smalley,
Shelton student

40

Whacks

Nonfiction by
Kitty Johnson
Shelton

Faculty Member

Unless you are a Galapagos turtle, you probably won't celebrate your twenty-fifth wedding anniversary more than once. Therefore, my husband and I vowed to have a unique whoop-it-up on our twenty-fifth anniversary, August 27, 2005. The idea of stay-



ing at the Lizzie Borden Bed and Breakfast in Fall River, Massachusetts had been percolating in our brains since we heard about it on NPR a few years ago.

(If you're not familiar with the case, here's the nutshell version: while it's pretty obvious that Lizzie did it, she was still found not guilty, primarily because of her money and position.)

We made our reservations and got on the plane

See **Whacks**
Page 3

et al...

•A resurrected golfer tees off at Augusta, sports fiction ...Page 6

•Poetry, as only *Maxwell's* can bring you...Page 3

•An art gallery, minus the snooty critics...Page 8



Quality-Time From Page 1

boot some dog's obviously been chewing, and scattered gun shells.

As I head for the front porch, my eyes become irritated by the stirring dust that never settles on account of someone's always gunning their pickup down the dirt road, regardless of the time of day. Like her yard, Aunt Lizzie's front porch is also crowded. Managing to squeeze through while at the same time shaking hands and greeting dozens of sagging, pale-faced and turkey-gnawing relatives, I eventually make it inside the house, only to continue my pursuit of excusing myself while penetrating through another crowd.

Nearing the kitchen, in which half of its space also serves as the living room (the room in its entirety measures about twenty-two by fourteen feet), I find Aunt Lizzie sitting among others at the largest table facing the TV. Seeing me, her arms instantly stretch outward, beckoning for a hug, and her naturally friendly features intensify as her warm smile spreads wider.

Greeting all those seated at the table, I stoop down to hug Aunt Lizzie and listen to her tell about her upcoming surgery and what her doctor told her, particularly about his warning her to stop smoking.

"That man tole me I'm only hurtin' myself worsen by lightin' up these cigarettes," she says, abruptly turning her head to exhale a thick and chalky haze of well-ingested smoke. For a moment she stops to adjust her clear nosepiece, then glances down to check and make sure that her oxygen tank is still sitting upright next to her chair.

"He then tole me there wouldn't be any cigarettes in heaven," she continues. "But I let 'im know that while I walk heaven's gold streets I was gonna have me a pack of smokes in my pocket and one lit 'tween my purdy lips."

The both of us laugh, only Aunt Lizzie's laughter almost instantly becomes scratchy and results in a long, near-strangling cough. Flicking her ashes into an

ashtray that desperately needed dumping, she points to another table covered with homemade food, several bags of potato chips, and three-liter bottled sodas and hoarsely tells me to "hurry and git somethin' to eat."

mobiles. Chewing our food slowly like cattle, we become hopelessly absorbed in the TV's blinking ecstasy. Occasionally someone lets out a goofy laugh or unleashes an impressive belch.

ever the high school seniors are doing. Jobless and lacking ambition, he passes time tossing footballs with the seniors at the town car wash in addition to accompanying them when they "roll" people's houses and yards with

toilet paper. To the seniors, he's a role model; next year's batch will undoubtedly inherit the same admiration.

Nonetheless, it's after my dad and Daryl make a twenty-dollar bet on who's going to win the upcoming state university vs. snob university football game when a particularly short, stout and ash-haired woman comes stomping toward our direction and blocks the TV with her muscular body.

She has everyone's attention, kids and adults alike. Now facing the lanky fellow seated in the recliner (I believe he's one of my distant cousins), the woman wastes no time snatching him by the collar of his red and black-checked shirt, knocking about six little kids who were sitting in the man's lap to the floor.

"You sorry bastard," she yells. "Where in hell did you take my kids? Give 'em to me now!"

"What're you fussin' about now, woman? This is my weekend!"

"Like hell it is! You start payin' chile support like yore s'pose to and we'll talk yore weekend! You was only s'posed to pick 'em up from school and bring 'em to me at work and that was it!"

"Alright, woman, now I ain't lookin' for no fight."

Slapping the man across his squared jaw and causing his cigarette to fling to the floor, the woman demands, "Git my kids and I'll spare you the embarrassment."

As if on cue, two small boys begin squalling and dart for the front door. Seeing this, the stout woman releases the lanky man's shirt and dashes after them. The rest of us do the same and find a spot out in the yard in which to stand and watch the drama.

The woman is cussing loudly and screaming vicious threats as she begins dragging one of the boys by the arm of his long-sleeved shirt toward what must have been her car parked on the side of the dirt road. We all assume her screaming is intended for the man she snatched from the chair. Like her, the little boy she's dragging is having a fit as well - squirming, kicking and screaming.

The other little boy, we soon see, has climbed upon the cab of what must have been the man's truck in the middle of Aunt Lizzie's yard. The man himself is now propped cross-armed upon the truck's closed tail-

See Quality-Time
Page 4



"Destination" by Shelton alumna Tammy Anita Rice 2007 Winner - Best Photograph

"Nothing'll be left if you don't hurry," she adds, chuckling. "Not with this bunch."

Walking over to grab a paper plate and cup, I have to step over what seems like a herd of small children. One of them, a three or four-year-old blonde-haired boy with thick coke-bottle glasses and a froggy voice, lightly kicks my ankle and asks, "Hey, man, have you seen my gun anywheres?"

"Gun?"

"Yeah, I'm huntin' my watgun. We're gonna play 'Thugs.' You haveta have a gun to play 'Thugs.'"

"Naw. I don't reckon I've seen no gun."

Like a flash, the boy darts away and instantly vanishes within the crowd.

After fixing my plate, I head closer to the TV and stand among those sitting on Aunt Lizzie's wobbly recliner and aging couch. Several others are either squatting or sitting on the floor, or standing as well.

Its volume blaring on high, the TV cleverly seduces the attention spans of all us seated before it with bikini-clad babes posing in front of flashy sports

The TV only slightly begins to lose its effect during commercial breaks, in which some of us begin to stir and speak. My dad's sitting on the side of Aunt Lizzie's couch that's opposite where I stand. Moving next to his side, I'm able to catch some of what my cousin, Daryl, is telling him.

Apparently Daryl is going to "beat the livin' tar outta" some sixteen or seventeen-year-old. At age twenty-three, Daryl's social life solely consists of what-

Maxwell's Crossing

Editor

Matt Celozzi

Publisher

Dr. Jim Kenny

The Shelton State Courier and Maxwell's Crossing are campus publications, written and produced with the help of students.

Among other functions, they are intended as a vehicles for student expression, and all students are urged to participate with submissions of written and artistic material.

The college seeks to ful-

fill the statement for academic freedom in working with the students in the production of this paper.

All publications are subject to review by the Publications Action Group, which has been delegated the responsibility to review all college publications for content and accuracy.

The Courier is an equal opportunity employer and student organization.

Whacks From Page 1

heading north to Fall River. I will spare you the details of the trip's agonies (the surrealistically surly luggage people, the false exits on the strange highways at midnight, etc. etc.) The trip was worth the pain: It was wonderful! We had reserved the 'murder' bedroom (that's where Lizzie's stepmother had been murdered) and, except for the screams I heard right after I fell asleep and the strange force that moved my husband's glasses from one table to the next, we slept like babies!

After an excellent breakfast (which included sugar cookies in the shape of little hatchets), we joined the other tourists in a tour of the Borden home. As the guide took us through the house, showing us various grisly highlights (the autopsy photographs!), she also mentioned, with a commendable sense of fairness, some of the other suspects: a bushy-haired stranger, Lizzie's peculiar Uncle John, and Bridget the maid who had been washing windows during the murders.

(I was even able to sneak in a photograph of my husband's lying in the same room and in the same position Lizzie's father had been murdered in!)

When it was over, we struck up a conversation with two burly men in their fifties from New Hampshire. We had just seen the last season of *The Sopranos*, and these men struck us as naggingly familiar.

Guy One: What about that maid. That don't seem right.

Guy Two: Yeah, she said she didn't hear nothin' but that's an awful small house.

Guy One: It takes a lot of time to beat somebody to death with a hatchet.

Guy Two: Yeah, and the noise it makes? You wouldn't believe how much noise you can make killing somebody. Say, are youse two stickin' around? We could have lunch or something.

But we had another plane to catch.

Flowers of Mine By Mathew S. Weems, Shelton Student 2007 Winner — Best Poem

How they come to me
when the Spring makes the tree
grow into a lovely shade of green.
All the flowers I have ever seen
do any say "thou'st love me?"

I adore them with their curves
and their lines and their mirths
and the heavenly voices they sing
with. Let the bells ring
for I am bound to swerve.

Let me woo them
and not condemn
she among them to be
beloved by me
from head to stem.

You come in the month of January
Oh, Daffodil, you come to me.
How I admire your crown and
petals
with the integrity of a tea kettle.
Yet why doth spring not give sanctuary?

You warm me in the dead of winter
when the men are out to cut a

There's a Stranger in My House

By Brenda Sanders, Shelton Student

There's a stranger in my house and I don't know
who it is.
She's torn between the Good Girl and the Bad Girl
thing.

There's a stranger in my house and I don't know
who she is!

"Until" I walk past the mirror and realize it is a
reflection of myself; torn between the good girl and
the bad girl thing; loving everybody else and
neglecting myself. There's a stranger in my house
and it's me...

The Darkness of Light

By Stephanie Campbell, Shelton Student

As I sit alone in the dark
Waiting for my light to spark
Death will see the hurt in me
Although truth will reflect upon my mystery
The pain is rough but my heart is oh so tough
It hurts to see my mystery but my light will comfort
me

The light will see my victory
However the dark will never be an enemy
Because the day will come that the light will say
come here my son
The dark is strong but forever gone
The light is peaceful and forever long
The light is bright and left on because forever I am,
strong.

splinter
and show me the way of Cupid.
Let us not be Stupid,
for you don't wish me to enter.

Lillie, Lillie, the daughter of
Persephone.
Living up to my spring time
dreams on
my love life is of thee
Lillie, O Lillie
the eyes of yours are the sun.

Yet thou wishes that I take leave
and head to home with my heart
on the sleeve.

Could I do such and move on
and make my way to Alderbaron
and watch the stars in the cleave.

Rose, the young blossoming child
of spring
for you are such a pretty thing
to see. Rose, your beauty tells me
that one is close to thee
in the age of thinking.

Why Rose, why is it that so, please
tell me true

that you can touch me
but I can't touch you?
Why does this double standard
make kind act
be that of surprise attack on the
cataract?
I wish to wipe away the salty dew.

Daisy, thy legs are smooth yet thy
words
are that that spread discords.
You seem to make delight
within the safety of the twilight
at seeing men use harsh words.

Dear Pansy, who hides in a veil,
let me see your darling belle
and see the goddess within.
I appear to be ready to begin
the process of getting pale.

For I see so many young flowers
each with love's seductive powers
being more of a bother
than my significant other
in this beauquais of flowers.

Love Sonnet By Chris Wilkerson, Shelton Student

Love is genuine, steadfast, and true,
Something words alone cannot describe,
For so long my love for her she never knew,
And no remedy for my love can anyone prescribe,
The moment I set eyes upon her I knew it was real,
For true love has been unknown to me for so long,
Life without her would be a devastating ordeal,
I know that having her love nothing can ever go
wrong,
Being with her makes my life feel so right,
Never did I predict anyone could make me feel like
this,
Her extravagant beauty could brighten even the
darkest night,
I knew that it was love from the very first kiss,
The wait seemed so long with the turn of every sea-
son
But I know God put her in my life for a definite rea-
son.



Quality-Time From Page 2

gate.

Having managed to shove the one boy into her car, the stout woman makes her way toward the man's truck. From inside the car, the little boy opens the door and yells to his brother, "Hurry up and git in daddy's truck, Yewgene! She can't leave without you!" The boy then jolts from the car, leaving the door open, and reunites with the others at the man's truck.

Amid the man and woman's cussing and lawsuit threats, the other little boy is still propped on his knees upon the cab of the man's truck. Bouncing up and down, he repeatedly wails, "I wanna go wif my daddy! I'm stayin' wif my daddy!" Through the moonlight, the boy's face becomes visible. A flowing trail of clear snot from both his nostrils has wet his upper lip; his eyes are red and his face is soaked from crying.

Running in circles around the man's truck, the other little boy stops occasionally to scream something disrespectful at his mother when the man does so. As for the rest of us, we're still laughing at the scene. One guy starts laughing so hysterically that he trips over his own feet and rolls around on the damp and chilly ground, occasionally regaining just enough composure to allow his hands to feel around for the beer he dropped.

"Ain't that pitiful," someone suddenly comments. I glance behind me and find Aunt Lizzie's sister, Truella. "They owta be ashamed carryin' on like this... you know."

I don't know whether she's referring to the man and woman with the kids, or those of us who are laughing. Perhaps both. But despite her typical nose-lifting attitude, one can clearly see the sheer excitement in Aunt Truella's eyes. She, too, was being entertained by the front-yard drama. After all, even she needs some type of entertainment, especially while waiting for Saturday night to arrive so

she can finally go man-hunting in bars.

Afterward on Sunday morning, she'll be at church speaking in tongues and "filled with the Holy Spirit."

Eventually the man and woman settle down and keep their voices at a minimum, and some of us watching begin to go back inside, out of the cold. Shivering, we head back toward the TV, and my dad and Daryl continue their football dispute.

Realizing I'm still holding my empty plate, I head over to the garbage to throw it away. On my way back to the TV, I stop to talk with Aunt Lizzie again.

While giving her extra details on what had just happened in her front yard, the little blonde boy with coke-bottle glasses who'd earlier asked me if I'd seen his water gun suddenly reappears right in front of us.

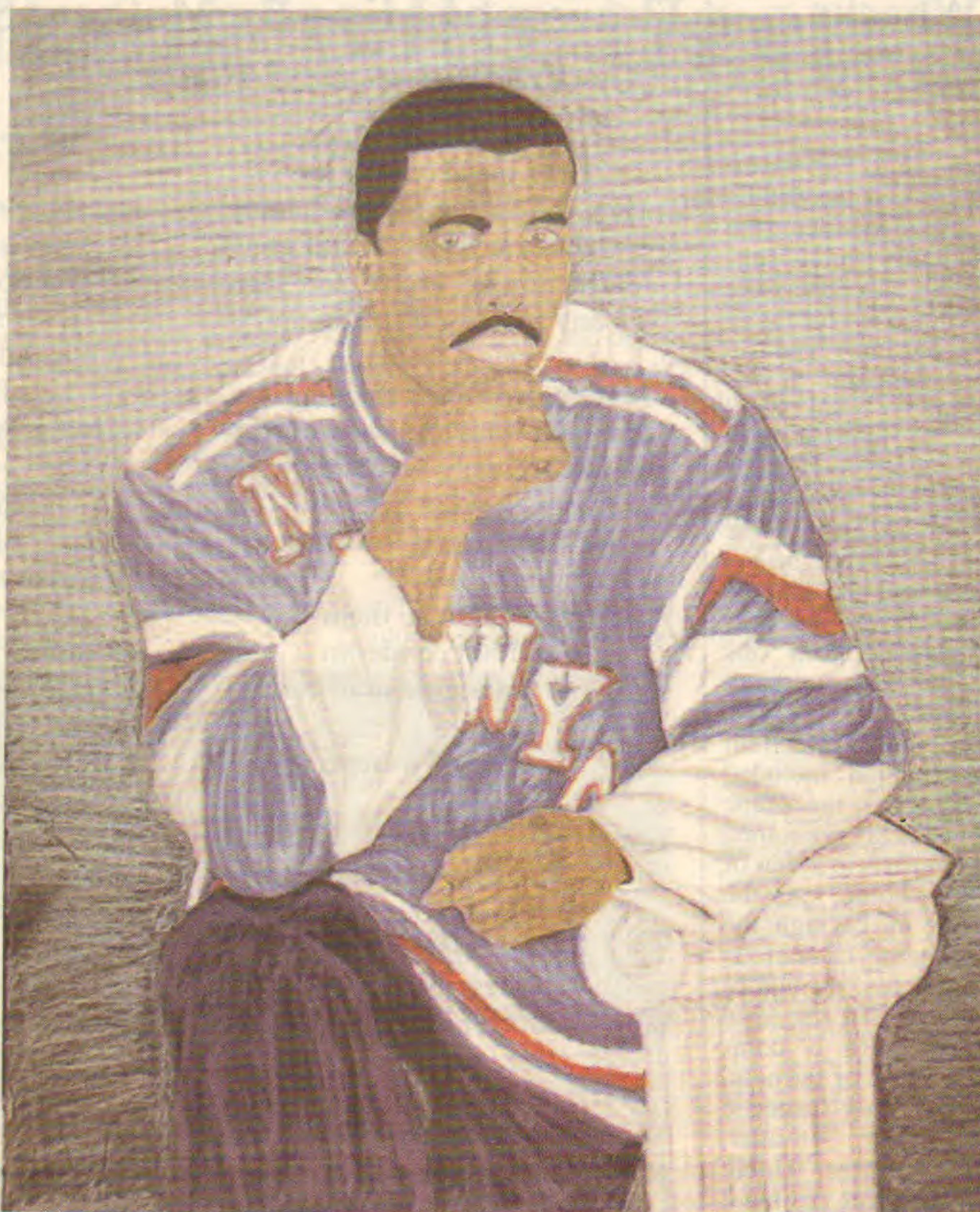
Owl-eyed and with fists balled and shaking before his face as if he were trying to withhold some sort of overwhelming inner anguish, the boy says, "Meemaw Lizzie, *whattsa man gotta do!*?" Clearly he's imitating somebody, possibly his daddy.

Chuckling, Aunt Lizzie replies, "I reckon he's still gotta become one first, Mister Man. Why, what's the matter?"

Reaching into his jeans pocket, the boy pulls out the crushed remains of his plastic water pistol. It looks as though someone had stepped on it, probably while playing "Thugs."

As Aunt Lizzie tells the boy to throw the pieces away, the man from the front yard drama returns back inside. "I swear that gawl dang woman belongs in a loony bin," he declares while heading back to the TV. "I tellya, a man can only take so much."

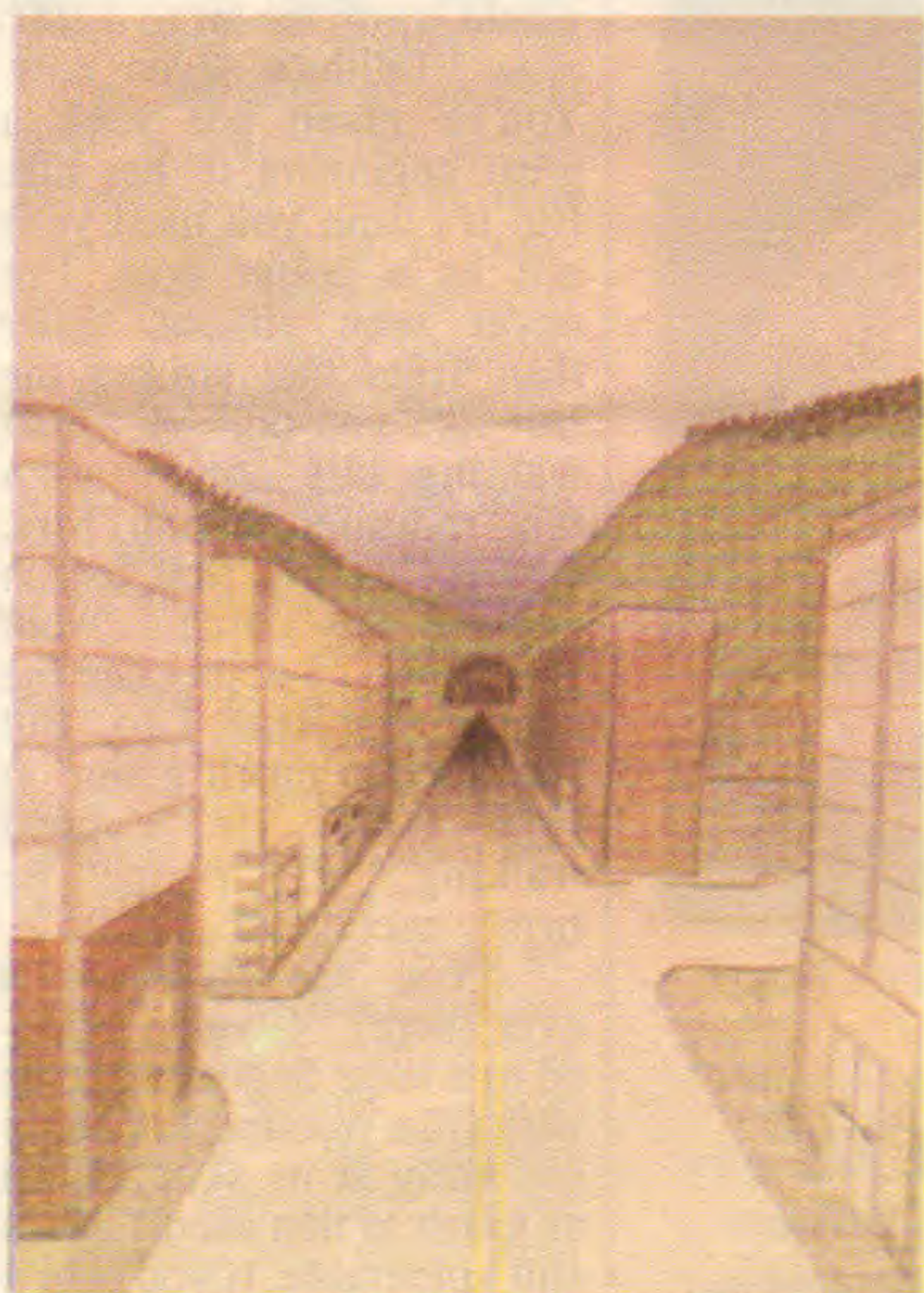
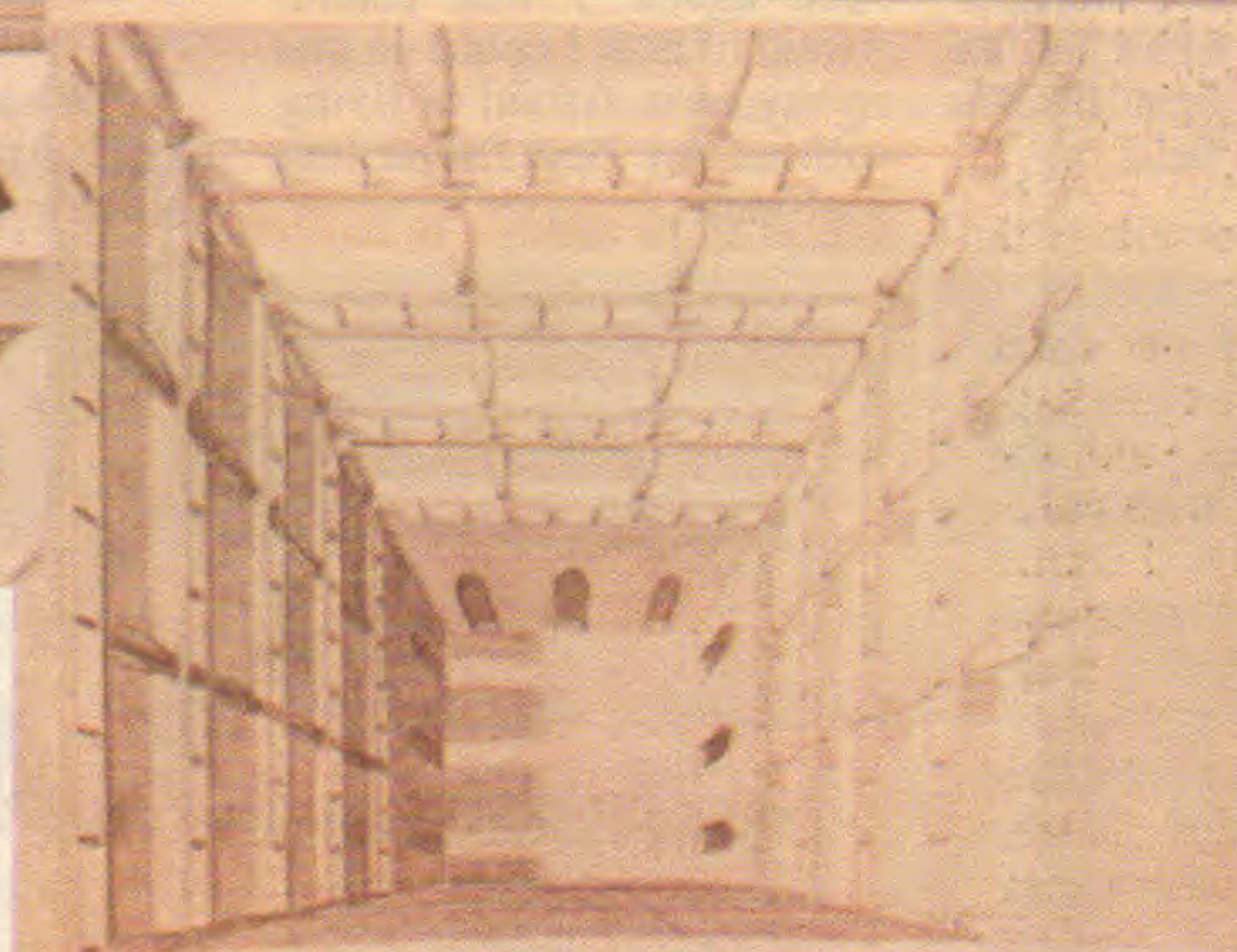
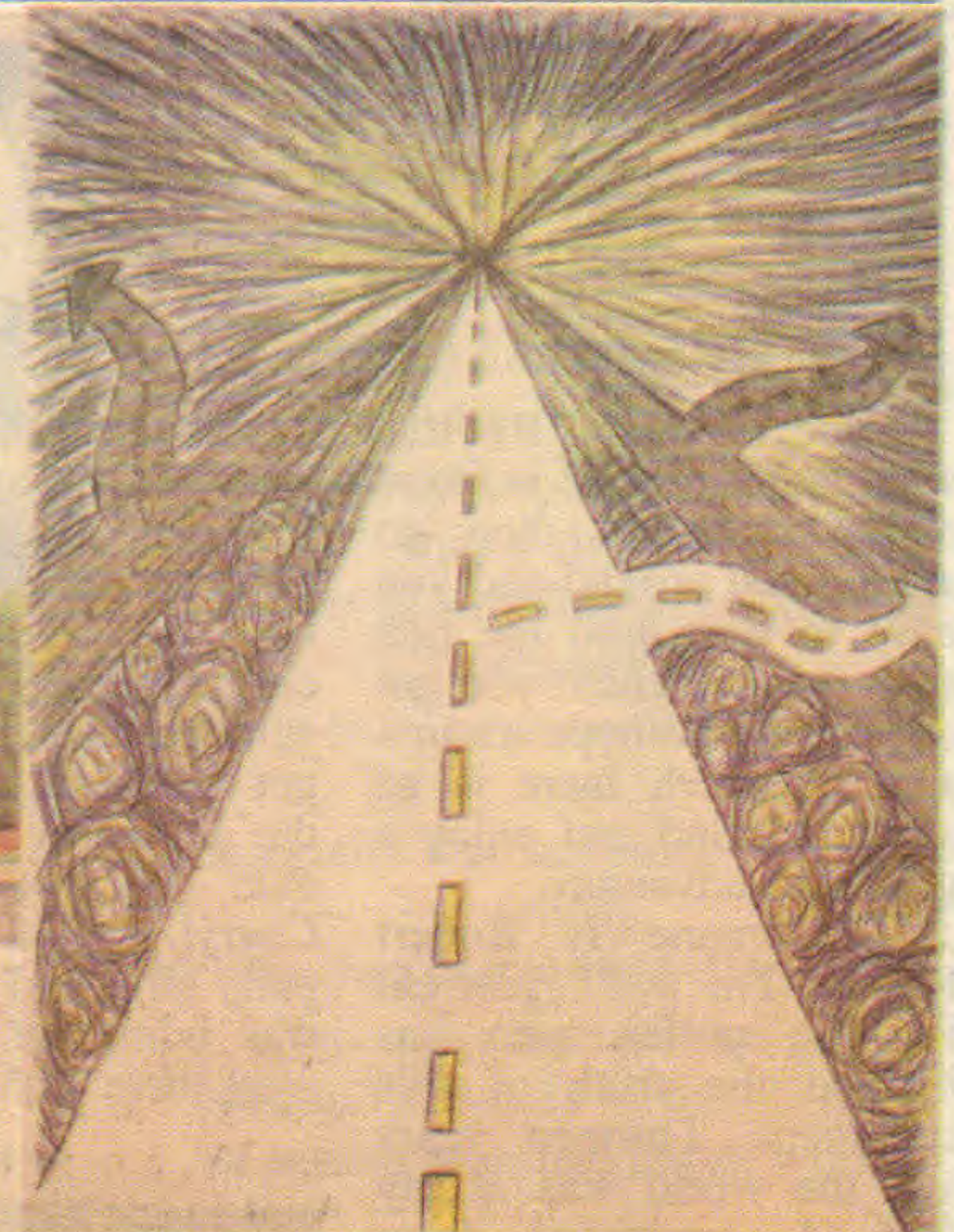
"Aww, ya'll men 'ventually git over it," Aunt Lizzie hoarsely comments while trying to decide whether to light a cigarette or take another good, long snort of life from her oxygen tank. "Ya'll always do, anyhow... Ain't that right, Mister Man?"



The Smartest Man I Knew,
Painting By Carlos Hernandez, Shelton Student



Shoenucopia
By Rachel Ross, Shelton Student



(L-R, Top to Bottom) **Grapes with Vase** By Katie Habrial, Shelton Student; **Open Door** By Katie Habrial; **Yellow Burst** By Adam Smalley, Shelton Student; **Five Stories Looking Down** By Catherine Lake, Shelton Student; **Notes** By Eric Thomas, Shelton Student; **House with Rooms** By Cara Bush, Shelton Student; and two sketch photos called **Luminar y Kin** by Neil Zanthos, Shelton Student



Maxwell's Crossing would like to thank Art Instructor James Styres and his students for sharing their work with us and the readers of this publication.

Finally Walking with Tiger

Fiction By Tom McFall, *Shelton Student*

Life is funny. It's true what they say. Life is like a merry-go round. You go around and around and you have to wait until the ride stops to see where you get off. Then, you hope it's in a spot in which there is an ability to find and enjoy a great new adventure.

My name is Robert Planter. I'm a 37 year-old Pro-Am golfer who has learned the truth of this statement. Thirteen years ago the world was at my feet. I graduated from Arizona State University earning a Masters in Sociology courtesy of a golf scholarship. At twenty-three years old, I was ranked number-one by Golfweek magazine and number-one by Golfstat.

This propelled me to Augusta where I not only received the Silver Cup, (an award given to an amateur for making the cut), but the Hole in One crystal for a miraculous one-stroke on the 12th hole. But I don't remember too many great details about the tournament.

On the second day, I was partnered with Ernie Ells. Having just teed off to begin the 7th, my caddie Kyle Stanley tapped my shoulder. I hadn't even noticed the course official approaching us. "Mr. Planter, there's been an accident sir. You better come with me." A million thoughts ran through my mind. The crowd looked as confused as I did. As the rope was raised, I noticed Georgia State patrolmen and more course officials waiting.

Taken to a small media tent, people were asked to clear out. Kyle sat down next to my right as I was handed a telephone. It was Charlie Greene, Cheryl's father. "She didn't make it Robert. It was a freak accident. A pickup ran the light and she didn't have a chance. Are you there?" I couldn't breathe. "Robert?" I could hear his voice, but it seemed to be a distant echo. "And Talitha? I asked. How is Talitha?" "She's fine, he replied. Not a scratch."

The next thing I knew, I was on my way back home to Scottsdale, just outside of Phoenix. Kyle had wept with me as we were all close. With all of our backyard barbeques and family get-togethers, we were like the brothers neither of us ever had. Carolyn and Cheryl giggled like slumber party girls, and when Talitha was born, our best friends were there with bells on.

As I walked up the gate ramp, I could see everyone waiting. Mom, dad, in-laws, and friends. I was covered with hugs. Looking into the stroller, I could see Talitha. Her sleeping face had brought water to my eyes once again. I was afraid. Afraid of how I could do this on my own. Afraid of living without my best friend, my soul-mate.

break of dawn, or dusk of the evening, I was out there. I played against myself. I played against the demons that tried to bring me down. Tucking Talitha in at night allowed me to still love life and to trust in what was to come

"What was mommy like?" At seven years old, Talitha's curiosity for life's

"You think that you're pretty sneaky don't you?" My 9-iron dug in and threw a full, toupe-sized clump of turf. It was my boss Ryan Gooden. The sprinklers had just shut off as I approached my first hole that morning. "I've been watching you for years and I can't stand it anymore." Gooden was a hell of a player back in the day and his course was an instant success with its challenging design. "Stand what?" I asked. "Take a walk with me," he replied.

The distant yelps of the coyotes meant they were done with their nightly quest for food. It wouldn't be long before the Arizona sun would warm the air to a 100° plus. "Talitha's seven now. You've given her such a great beginning to her life. But it's time you used your gift as a golfer now. I've never seen anyone other than Tiger that strokes the ball like you do." I wasn't wanting this conversation this morning. I had Mrs. Gilcrest as my first lesson and she was a rich.....well, you know. "I appreciate the compliment Ryan, I do. But I've got too much going on right now." He stopped walking. "Pig poop," he firmly exclaimed.

"You see that cactus over there?" Gooden pointed to a large Saguaro Cactus with Gila Woodpecker hacking away at its skin. "Even as tough as that cactus is, it's still vulnerable. If you take it out of its environment, it won't survive. Too much of this, or too little of that, and it's gone, history. You're out of your environment Robert. You're living and making it, but you need to get back on tour." He was serious. "The FBR Open is coming soon. You need to consider entering the field. I've talked to the tour committee and they're willing to let you play." Formally known as the Phoenix Open, the FBR was an incredible course.



Fairy Tale Princess

By Katie Habrial, *Shelton Student*

I met Cheryl in my junior year at ASU. Always running late, I was running out the front doors of the library, tripped, and fell with her into a hydrangea bush. Both of us were quite surprised. "Geesh, is this your way of asking me out?" She had a sense of humor; great. I picked a full flowering branch and held it up. "Well, what do you say?" We both laughed and the rest was history. We got married that summer and spent our senior year in an off-campus apartment. As beautiful as Cheryl was, she glowed brighter while pregnant with our daughter Talitha.

Golf was a forgotten thought over the next few months as I needed to lay out my priorities. Talitha was my number-one. Ryan Gooden owned the Sanctuary, a course in the foothills of Scottsdale and offered me the position of Head Instructor. I accepted and have been there ever since.

Family, friends, and fans have asked over the years when I was going to get back on the tour. When I would shrug my shoulders and mumble, they never pressed the issue. Little did they know that I still played virtually every day. At the

many mysteries was never-ending. Although my answers were always the same, she never tired of listening. I pulled the covers up and she tucked them under her arms. "Mommy was like a favorite song. Whenever she spoke, it made everyone happy. People would smile and their day would be better. She loved you so much, and when you were born, the sun shined brighter." Her reply was always the same. "Really?" "Really," I said. "I must be pretty special." Her dimples became exaggerated with a missing-tooth smile. "Yes, you are, just like mommy."

Finally
cont'd on Page 7

Finally from Page 6

Sitting in the den, I had my father on the phone. As we talked, my eyes shifted from my trophies, to the multiple golf-course paintings, to the bi-foldable picture frame of Cheryl and Talitha. I had told my dad about the conversation with Ryan Gooden that morning. He laughed when I told the now-familiar lesson mishaps with my student Mrs. Gilcrest. Hanging up the phone, I reached into the top desk drawer and pulled out a photo. It was of Cheryl and I. I had just received the NCAA Div I Championship trophy. It was hard to tell who was happier as she was so glad for me.

"Don't you like to play daddy?" Talitha was standing on the other side of my desk. "What do you mean pumpkin?" I asked. "Well, everybody should play. It's important. If you don't play, life isn't any fun." She was just too cute. "Come here," I said. I do like to play hun." I gave her a big hug. She looked at me real serious. "Then you should play." I gave Talitha another squeeze and patted her off to bed.

I didn't sleep that night; at least not very well. Tossing, turning, and watching the clock, I knew I had little choice. I needed to do this.

I walked into Gooden's office later that morning. "I don't even have a caddie. I can't ask Kyle as he's buried in responsibilities with Nike." My best bud's marketing degree had paid off as Nike gave him a huge position in their Region-West Marketing Department. "What, I'm not good enough for ya?" Ryan Gooden leaned back in his oversized, leather diamond-tucked executive chair. I laughed. "Never even thought about it." He leaned forward. "Don't need to. You can be my boss for a change." He reached his hand out and we shook on it.

I played great at the FBR Open. I was matched with a South Korean by the

name of Brian Cheung. The guy lifted my game up as his drives were okay, but his short game was dangerous. Gooden's wisdom was invaluable. Cheung and I had moved up through the field together and we ended up finishing 14th and 15th; I the latter.

I didn't fair as well at the "import tourneys" as Gooden referred to them: The Nissan Open and Honda Classic. But I excelled in the others. My bank account was starting to love my deposits, and I was definitely finding my groove. I quickly sprung to the Top 50 Players list in the Official World Golf Association. This brought me not only an invite to the World Golf Championship, but a special opportunity.

Gooden and I were able to have a quiet lunch with Tiger Woods and his caddie Steve Williams. As Tiger was a private person, we met in his suite. Tiger's wife and Terri Gooden, Ryan's daughter, had run off to take Talitha out for lunch and shopping.

"I better watch out for you at Augusta," Tiger said with a smile. Gooden spilled coffee on the front of his white crew shirt. He was as excited as I to be there. "It's great to have you on the tour as we kind of missed each other; your time away and all." I nodded. "Yes we have." I replied. "I don't think you'll have to much to fear, but I am getting my game."

I ended up at 12th in the field ending my final day matched with Greg Norman. He was a true wild-man and loved talking about yachts. His current one is 230 feet long and Gooden and I received an open invite.

That brings me to now. Here I sit on a back-deck of a new, but old-styled plantation home situated on the 12th green. A Jonathan White had called with an invitation to stay at his home. "If y'all don't show up, my wife will have a fit," he said in a long drawl. Making it in some auto-parts chain, White's Discount Auto, the guy was rolling in it.

It's Sunday morning; early Sunday morning. I'm partnered with none other than Tiger Woods. My

merry-go-round has stopped in a place for a hell of an adventure ride. The sun is barely creeping it's way into the day, and I'm watching as the sprinklers make their long, steady pass, then flutter in a spitting motion back to their original position. The fine mist slowly floats to the perfectly flattened grass, leaving little diamonds.

Robins, Jays, and other birds rustle about. Making songs and squawks; it's peaceful and my coffee tastes great. The sliding-glass door behind me opens, and I hear the light running patter of feet coming. Talitha jumps in front of me. "Hi!" she exclaims, as if thinking she'll startle me. "Good morning princess." I scoop her up into my lap and she settles under my arm, laying her head on my shoulder.

"I'm proud of you too daddy." I lean my head back to look at her face. "You are?" She reaches into the pocket of her robe and pulls out a photo. It's the one of Cheryl and I with my NCAA trophy. My throat tightened and my eyes watered. "I'm glad you are sweetie. You're my inspiration." Talitha hugs me. "And mommy?" "Yes, and mommy too," I say smiling.

Tiger and I shake hands as we approach the tee. I shake Steve William's hand as Gooden and Tiger do the same. It doesn't take long to figure out who to talk to, and who not to talk to when matched when another player. Reputation usually supersedes the pairing. Tiger is much too intense, and the talk is very light as we progress.

Every once in a while, I catch a look at Talitha and Terri Gooden standing outside the rope marking off the field of play. We exchange smiles and waves. Tiger's getting irritated as he's unsatisfied with a few shots allowing me to stay with him. We're both at nine-under par; the next closest is Vijay Singh at seven-under.

The crowd gets more and more vocal as the day gets closer to an end. I'm still finding it hard to believe Tiger and I are paired up. It just seems so unreal. But, I am playing great. Approaching the 18th, we're both eleven-under, Singh is

nine-under.

Tiger crushes the ball off the tee. I watch as it elevates up to a whole different level of the atmosphere. It wanders towards the right, bouncing it's way towards a cluster of trees; partially blocking a clear second shot. I won't tell you what he just said. Gooden gives me a smile and head-nod.

My drive feels perfect off the tee and the crowds approves with applause and shouts. It lands in the middle of the fairway, shy of Tiger's, but centered. I have a chance.

My second shot should be further, but it lands on the apron of the green. I look over towards the world's best golfer analyzing his situation.

Tiger's second shot is one of the most beautiful I have ever seen. It curves right around the imposing trees and centers itself in the middle of the green. He pumps his fist; then high-fives his caddie Williams.

"It's not over 'til the fat lady sings." Gooden smiles and hands me a two iron. He sees my questioning face and responds. "Run and gun baby....run and gun. It's a long walk from the ball to

the hole." As we get to the ball, I see that he's right. "This drives the announcers crazy," he says.

As Gooden walks away, I'm left alone with my thoughts. The crowd is mostly quiet with a few coughs, whispers, and odd noises. I line the club for a fast straight on shot, not wanting to give it a chance to break. Silence. When a ball leaves the club right, you know it. And it feels right. It goes straight for the cup and swirls around the edge, stopping left by a foot. The crowd moans. Gooden smiles and hands me my putter.

Tiger's ball is six feet from the hole. Taking his time, he looks at it from every angle. A few words with Williams, and the caddie walks away. There's a hell of a break two feet from the cup in his line. He taps it. Slowly moving up, over, sideways, the ball drops in. The Green Jacket is his.

Talitha runs up to me and hugs my waist. "You did it," she said. "Did what?" I asked. "You played and had fun." She was all smiles. I smiled back and dropped to a knee. "Yes I did, Pumpkin, yes I did."



Houndstooth Print By

Catherine Lake, Shelton Student

Maxwell's Gallery



(L-R, Top to Bottom)

Burn By Joel Hancock, Shelton Student; **Books** by Katie Habrial, Shelton Student; **Green Tree in Quad** By Habrial; **Self-Portrait** By Catherine Lake, Shelton Student; **Old State Capital Ruins** photograph By Ernest Metcalf, Shelton Student; **Deer** By P.A. Cole, Shelton Faculty; **Tree** By Danielle Colley, Shelton Student

